

# Priorities of the State Environmental Policy of Russia and Kazakhstan: Global Agenda and Regional Projection

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**Abstract** – The article discusses approaches to justifying and implementing nation-wide priorities in the field of environmental policy of Russia and Kazakhstan. Data on the role of national priorities as substantial determinants that define vectors and specific mechanisms for implementing environmental policy in post-Soviet countries and countries with the advanced market economy are systematised. The relationship between national priorities and priorities of supranational environmental policy implemented by global international organisations (UN - Sustainable Development Goals; EU – Environmental Policy Goals until 2050; BRICS - Environmental Initiatives) is substantiated. The key characteristics of national priorities in the field of environmental policy of Russia and Kazakhstan are compared, including review of the approaches of global international organisations; prioritised areas and fields of public environmental policy; implemented funding mechanisms and organisational forms; approaches to institutionalising the priorities of public environmental policy within the existing public administration system. Problems of implementation of environmental policy priorities in Russia and Kazakhstan are identified and their causes are substantiated. At the same time, special attention is paid to the study of how national priorities of environmental policy are translated into regional management decisions; identification of gaps between the formulated national priorities and their implementation procedures in specific industrial regions of Russia and Kazakhstan. The best practices for implementing environmental policy priorities at the national and regional levels are compared. Finally, conclusions about ways to improve environmental policy mechanisms and the possibilities of distribution of the best regional practices identified are drawn. The empirical basis of the analysis was obtained from the results of studies carried out as part of the research work “Improvement of the state policy regulation for accelerated clustering of the industrial regions”, executed under grant financing of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**Keywords** – Environmental policy; industrial regions; national goals; post-Soviet countries; regional priorities for environmental policy; sustainable development.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ecosystems are a single organism, so disturbances in one of its areas lead to global consequences. This is particularly the case for the ecosystems of the neighbouring states – their border territories are particularly closely interconnected. The deterioration of the situation in one part will inevitably affect the other. Sustainability issues of the ecosystem development are particularly important if these neighbouring countries have a developed industrial sector and a high proportion of legacy industries that have a negative impact on the environment. In Eurasia, Russia and Kazakhstan are among the neighbouring countries with the largest ecosystems on the continent. These countries are among the largest states of Eurasia in terms of the size of both their economies and areas. The long-term neighbourhood and commonality of historical development paths still influence the existing territorial division of production and labour, define the interdependence of infrastructure and contribute to the rapprochement of strategic visions of the future. One of the common strategic priorities of the two countries is the implementation of effective state environmental policies and the protection of the environment. Thus, addressing the Federal Assembly in 2020, the President of the Russian Federation noted that the problems of ecology, climate change, pollution of the oceans and environment are common challenges of global development. The need for a transition to a closed-loop economy and creation of a nationwide environmental monitoring system for the state of air, water and soil, is emphasised [1]. Addressing the People of Kazakhstan, the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev emphasised the need to critically rethink the arrangement of raw material industries, approaches to the natural resource management, increase the requirements for energy efficiency and conservation of enterprises, as well as ecological safety and efficiency of energy producers [2]. Implementation of these goals requires a large-scale and responsible public environmental policy that on the one hand must be in line with the global goals of sustainable development, and on the other hand, must ensure the effective integration of global and national priorities. Territorial neighbourhood and established economic relations require inter-state coordination and environmental priorities for the development of the two countries.

However, despite the priorities stated at the highest level, the real environmental situation in Russia and Kazakhstan is of serious concern. In Russia, a significant part of the territory (60–65 % of the country's area) is preserved in its natural state (not disturbed by economic activity) [3]. At the same time, the environmental condition of 15 % of Russia's territory does not meet the standards [4]. The environmental situation in Kazakhstan is seriously undermined by large industrial enterprises, land desertification, soil erosion, etc. In particular, forests cover only 4 % of the total area of the republic and are on the verge of extinction [3]. Equally serious environmental problems exist in Russia and Kazakhstan at the regional level. The sharp increase in the anthropogenic load and the lack of effective rather than declared economic mechanisms that stimulate environmental management undermine the foundations of the long-term sustainable development and form a negative attitude of the society. For example, in Russia, experts consider the environmental situation to be one of the main risks in terms of the importance of the threat of mass protests [5]. The publications of the following authors are important for assessing the extent of the negative anthropogenic impact on the environment in Russia and Kazakhstan: Turgel, Panzabekova, Satpayeva [6], Grebeneva, Aleshina, Smagulova [7]; Adilbekova and Sultanova [8]; Baikenova, Benz, Sugralina [9].

The above-mentioned circumstances make one think - how the existing approaches to the formation of environmental policy goals in Russia and Kazakhstan are adequate regarding the requirements of the current situation and in which cases there are systemic failures that

prevent the stabilisation of the environmental situation. At the same time, despite the considerable interest in the environmental policy's goal-setting issues, there is a significant lack of research on a comparative assessment of approaches to goal-setting in various countries. Another important problem that has not yet been resolved: the balance of national and global priorities in formulating environmental policy objectives at the national level. This study is intended to fill the existing substantial gaps in the study of environmental policy of Russia and Kazakhstan and formulate recommendations to improve the efficiency of public policy.

To answer this question, the authors compared the experience of justifying national environmental policy goals in Russia and Kazakhstan; compare the priorities of the environmental policies of the countries analysed and the experience of international supranational alliances; consider how adequately the national goals of environmental policy are reflected at the regional level. The article aims to compare approaches to justifying the national priorities of the state environmental policy of Russia and Kazakhstan and to identify ways of improving them considering global international trends.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The methodological basis of the study were papers on sustainable development, the relationship between economic and environmental goals in government decision-making, the rationale for national environmental policy goals and their modification at the regional level. The performed study includes three logically-related stages. In the first stage, the global environmental policy goals formulated at the level of the United Nations and supranational interstate associations (EU, BRICS, EEU) were systematised - a comparison of the global agenda and priorities of the environmental policy of Russia and Kazakhstan was made. The inclusion of the UN to the analysed group is due to the fact that the organisation forms global priorities for the development of states with various types of social, economic and political systems. BRICS and EEU integration associations have been chosen due to the fact that today they are one of the most important and influential international organisations created with the active participation of Russia (BRICS and EEU) and Kazakhstan (EEU). The inclusion of the EU in the analysed group makes it possible to compare the environmental policy goals of countries with different levels of economic development. The provisions contained in publications Daly [10], Redclift [11], Elliott [12]. were used to assess the role of environmental protection in the system of global goals' sustainable development. The abovementioned authors elaborate the principle of relationship between the level of maturity of a democratic society, economic and social progress, and sustainable environmental development. In the framework of the current research the implementation of this principle explains the differences between the goal-setting of the supranational interstate associations that unite countries with different socio-economic and political systems. Particularly noteworthy is the conclusion of Redclift [11] regarding the changes in the assessment of the importance of environmental conservation when the key ideological paradigms of national and supranational policy change, and the transformation of the institutional organization of management decision processes.

In the second stage, a structural and comparative analysis of the mechanisms of institutionalisation and implementation of the environmental policy of Russia and Kazakhstan was carried out. To analyse the changing role of environmental issues in the value system of the population of the post-Soviet countries, the provisions contained in the publications by Pischulov [13] and Sidorov [14] were used. In particular, there is a significant gap between

the declared state priorities of environmental policy and the actual experience of their implementation. At the same time, the gap between declared and actual priorities is higher in states with more authoritarian political regimes and a higher level of centralization in the economy.

The authors analyse the modern regulatory framework of the Russian Federation's environmental policy, formulate key environmental problems at the national level, and consider the favourable state of the environment as an important determinant of the population's quality of life. The specifics of the formation of the national goals regarding the environmental policy of the Russian Federation are revealed in the publications by Voloshinskaya, Komarov, Kotsubinsky [15], Tetiora [16], Gorelova [17]. In the current research the consideration of these specifics allows to identify the following key factors for comparison: organisation of the institutional decision-making about the priorities of the state policy; financial security mechanisms of the adopted priorities; gaps between substantive priorities and actual funding directions.

In the third stage, the method of goal-setting in the environmental policy of specific regions with different types of industrial specialisation was studied. Four regions in Russia were selected to analyse regional priorities of the environmental policy: Sverdlovsk region, Chelyabinsk region, Perm Krai and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug. The first three regions belong to the category of old-industrial regions with a high share of metallurgy and engineering industries. KhMAO is a region where oil and gas production dominates the economy. Comparative analysis of various aspects of environmental policy in the industrial regions of Russia and Kazakhstan is carried out in the publications by Turgel, Bozhko, Ulyanova, Khabdullin [18] and Artykbayeva [3].

For the understanding of environmental policy implementation specifics in industrial regions, the publications by Blewitt [19], Korhonen, [20], and Wu [21] were used. In this case, the authors focus on how global sustainable development goals are modified when attempted to be integrated into individual industry development policies and regional policies. Based on the conclusions of the abovementioned authors it was assumed that the choice of the priorities of environmental policy by the given regions will be first and foremost determined by the nature of their economic specialization. The importance of political and ideological factors at the regional level will weaken. More significance, on the contrary, will be the mechanism of integration national and regional priorities used in every country.

### **3. RESULTS**

The article compares the global environmental policy goals set out in the UN, EU, BRICS and EEU documents. The main goals of environmental policy are shown in Table 1. The associations analysed differ quite significantly in terms of approaches to the formulation of environmental priorities. The most fundamental goals of the global environmental policy are formulated today by the UN. By implementing the Green Economy concept, the UN pays great attention to monitoring and reducing environmental risks, as well as peoples' health and safety. On the one hand, the EU's priorities are complex, but on the other hand, they are quite specific. In the field of ecology, the EU implements an active policy of protecting natural capital, maintaining a competitive low-carbon economy and protecting EU citizens from the impact of negative environmental factors. On the contrary, the BRICS and the EEU focus on projects in certain sectors of the economy or certain areas of social policy. In its environmental policy, the BRICS prioritises ensuring the access to clean energy for all segments of the population and effective managing of the urban environment. This approach

is primarily due to the high rates of economic inequalities that persist in the BRICS countries. The high rates of inequality in different social strata of the population determine the high importance of measures aimed at improving the quality of life of the poorest classes of the population. The EEU focuses on expanding the support system for environmental technology exchange and the development of biotechnology under the environmental policy

TABLE 1. THE MAIN GOALS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OF INTERNATIONAL INTERSTATE ASSOCIATIONS (DRAWN UP ACCORDING TO [22]–[26])

No.	UN	EU
Goals		
1.	Monitoring the state of environmental elements (air and atmosphere, water, soil, land, landscape and natural sites, biodiversity and its components, including genetically-modified organisms, and interaction between these elements);	Protection, preservation and growth of the natural capital of the European Union;
2.	Analysis of factors (substances, energy, noise and radiation) affecting the environment and their effects;	Turn the European Union into a resource-saving, environmentally friendly and competitive low-carbon economy;
3.	Improvement of the system monitoring human health, safety and living conditions and cultural and built sites, as they are or may be affected by the state of environmental elements.	Protection of European Union citizens from environmental degradation related to risks for the health and well-being of the European Union's population;
4.		Increase of the share of reasonable investments in the European Union's environmental and climate policy.
BRICS		EEU
Goals		
1.	Ensure the access to clean, sustainable and low-cost energy for all segments of the population, diversification of energy sources, efficient use of fossil fuels and increase of the share of renewable energy sources, including biofuels, hydropower, solar and wind energy;	Development of tools to support the transfer of technology and knowledge between production facilities, scientific organisations and universities of EEU member states to enhance the global competitiveness of their economies;
2.	Improvement of the urban environmental management and the quality of life of the urban population through the exchange of knowledge and experience in waste management, economy circulation in the sector of sustainable consumption and production, sanitation, water and urban air quality, green urban areas.	Development of priority areas of biotechnology development in the EEU, including current biotechnology projects in agriculture, industry, energy and environmental protection, and financing sources and biotechnology support mechanisms in the EEU countries;
3.		Introduction of the cooperation to scientific, technical and innovative fields, improvement of the interaction efficiency between the businesses, science, state and public organisations by combining the potentials of the EU countries for the innovative development of water use and water body conservation and rehabilitation spheres.

As active members of the BRICS and EEU, Russia and Kazakhstan cannot ignore the prevailing approaches when shaping the national environmental policy agenda. In general, the level of economic development and the specifics of the organization of the political system of these countries makes it necessary to follow the course of implementing individual major

environmental projects. Issues of comprehensive protection of citizens from the influence of adverse factors and promotion of structural adjustment of the economy based on the principles of sustainable development are still remaining in the background.

In both Russia and Kazakhstan, the institutionalisation of environmental policy priorities is carried out by direct action documents and presidential decrees. In the Russian Federation, the main environmental policy goals were formulated in Decree No. 204 of the President of the Russian Federation of 07.05.2018 “On the national goals and strategic objectives of the development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2024”. Under this Decree, the “Ecology” National Project is being implemented [27]. In Kazakhstan, the priority environmental goals are reflected in the “Kazakhstan-2050” Strategy [28] and elaborated in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On measures on the implementation of the Head of State's Message “Kazakhstan-2050 Strategy” of 14 December 2012” [29]. As part of this Decree, amendments were made to the Environmental Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Law of Kazakhstan No. 273-VI of 26.11.19, which will come into force in May 2020.

The analysis of the above-mentioned regulations of the countries made it possible to highlight the main goals of Russia and Kazakhstan in the field of the environmental policy (Table 2).

TABLE 2. MAIN GOALS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OF RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN

Russia	Kazakhstan
Goals	
1. Ensure sustainable environmental management in the field of conservation, restoration and rational management of natural resources to ensure a supportive environment and environmental safety.	Create favourable living conditions by making a safe and eco-friendly environment, introducing balanced use of natural resources and preserving the biodiversity of the animal and vegetal life, ensuring the transition of the Republic of Kazakhstan to low-carbon development and a “green economy” to meet the needs of present and future generations.
2. Preservation of natural systems, maintenance of their integrity and life-sustaining functions for the sustainable development of society, improving the quality of life, improving the health of the population and demographic situation, and ensuring the environmental safety of the country.	Increase the state of geological exploration of the territory and replenishment of the mineral and raw material complex of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
3. Preservation and restoration of the natural environment of landscape diversity and biodiversity sufficient to maintain the ability of natural systems to self-regulate and compensate for man-made effects.	Ensure the conservation, restoration and rational management of animal and vegetal life, water resources, and protected natural areas.
4. Activities and monitoring of pollution reduction from emissions, discharges and waste, as well as specific energy and resource-intensive products and services.	
5. Ensure the safety in potentially dangerous activities and emergencies, including rehabilitation of areas and water zones affected by man-made environmental impacts.	
6. Introduction of environmental health priorities to improve the quality of life, health and life expectancy of the population by reducing adverse environmental impacts and improving environmental performance.	

7. Monitoring the prevention of terrorism that poses an environmental hazard and causes eco-deterioration and degradation of the natural environment.
8. Taking measures aimed to control the use and distribution of exotic species and genetically-modified organisms, including the importation, use and distribution of exotic species and genetically-modified organisms in the country.

Implementation of national environmental policy goals is based on project and program approaches. In the Russian Federation, the national project “Ecology” is one of thirteen national projects in various spheres of the country's life that operate under the President's Decree “On the national goals and strategic tasks for the development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2024”. The total budget of national projects for this period is 25 725.3 billion roubles. The “Ecology” National Project has a planned budget of 4041 billion roubles that is 15.7 % as a percentage of the total funding for all national projects [30]. Funding for the project is raised on a multi-channel basis, attracting funds not only from the federal budget but also from Russian entities and extra-budgetary sources. Such off-budget sources should provide almost 80 % of the total funding [31] (Table 3).

TABLE 3. FUNDING SOURCES, “ECOLOGY” NATIONAL PROJECT

No.	Funding source	billion RUR	%
1.	Federal budget	701.2	17.3
2.	Extra-budgetary sources	3206.1	79.3
3.	Budgets of Russian territorial subjects	133.8	3.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>4041</b>	<b>100</b>

The “Ecology” National Project involves the federal projects shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4. FEDERAL PROJECTS AS PART OF THE “ECOLOGY” NATIONAL PROJECT IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (DRAWN UP AND CALCULATED ACCORDING TO [31])

“Ecology” National Project			
No.	Federal project	Funding, billion RUR	%
1.	Introduction of the best technology available	2427.3	60
2.	Clean air	500.1	12.4
3.	Comprehensive municipal solid waste management system	296.2	7.3
4.	Clean water	245	6
5.	Volga rehabilitation	205.4	5
6.	Preservation of forests	151	3.4
7.	Clean country	124.2	3
8.	Infrastructure for managing the waste of I-II hazard classes	36.4	1
9.	Preservation of Lake Baikal	33.9	0.8
10.	Preservation of unique water bodies	15.2	0.4
11.	Conservation of biodiversity and the development of ecological tourism	6.3	0.1
<b>Total:</b>		<b>4041</b>	<b>100</b>

Under Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 276 “On the Republican Budget for 2020–2022” of 4 December 2019, the approved budget for 2020–2022 provides for 8 budget programmes in the field of ecology administrated by the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Table 5).

TABLE 5. STATE PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD OF ECOLOGY IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN  
(DRAWN UP AND CALCULATED ACCORDING TO [32])

No.	Budget programmes	Funding for 2020–2022, million KZT	%
1	Stabilisation and improvement the environmental quality	7541.0	4.0
2	Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions	426.5	0.2
3	Development of hydrometeorological and environmental monitoring	23 492.2	12.6
4	Promotion of Kazakhstan's accelerated transition to the Green Economy by promoting technology and best practices, developing business and investment	1299.7	0.7
5	Effective water resource management	72 193.7	38.7
6	Ensuring management, conservation and development of forest resources and wildlife	69 190.7	37.1
7	Improvement of the availability of knowledge and scientific research	472.2	0.2
8	Improvement of irrigation and drainage systems	11 749.9	6.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>186 365.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the list of programmes, one aimed at improving irrigation and drainage systems is the most important due to the natural conditions of the republic and the lack of water resources. Kazakhstan is less hopeful of co-financing from businesses. Priority is given to public funding. Work under the “Ecology” National Project assumes that on the one hand regions implement federal projects, and on the other hand, they can initiate their own projects corresponding to the substantial priorities at the national level. Information about regional projects implemented at the level of the Russian Federation's subjects is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS, RF (DRAWN UP ACCORDING TO [33]–[36])

No.	Regional projects	Sverdlovsk region	Chelyabinsk region	Perm Krai	KhMAO
1.	Clean country	+	+	–	+
2.	Clean air	+	+	–	–
3.	Preservation of forests	+	+	+	+
4.	Preservation of unique water bodies	+	+	+	+
5.	Conservation of biodiversity and the development of ecological tourism	+	+	–	+
6.	Clean water	–	+	+	+
7.	MSW handling	–	+	+	+

As part of the implementation of the environmental policy in the Sverdlovsk region, the following priorities are highlighted (Table 7). In the first place is the regional project Clean Air. The main objectives of the project are aimed at a significant reduction in the level of air pollution and improvement of its quality. Funding for this programme is 36.7 % of the total



funding for the region's environmental policy under the “Ecology” National Project. The priority nature of this project is defined primarily by the high concentration of ferrous and non-ferrous industries in the region. The second place belongs to the regional project “Preservation of Forests”. The main goals of the project are to preserve forests and ensure the balance of deforestation and their reproduction. The third place is for the regional project “Preservation of Unique Water Bodies”. In the last place, there is the regional project “Conservation of Biodiversity and the Development of Ecological Tourism”. The main goal of the project is to increase the number of specially protected natural areas of regional importance and expand their territory.

TABLE 7. FUNDING FOR REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS IN THE SVERDLOVSK REGION  
(DRAWN UP AND CALCULATED ACCORDING TO [33])

“Ecology” National Project			
No.	Regional projects of the Sverdlovsk region	Funding, million RUR	%
1.	Clean air	2192.41	36.7
2.	Preservation of forests	1623	27
3.	Preservation of unique water bodies	1324.89	22
4.	Clean country	551.83	9.2
5.	Conservation of biodiversity and the development of ecological tourism	306.3	5.1
<b>Total:</b>		<b>5998.43</b>	<b>100</b>

In Kazakhstan the main priorities of the region's environmental policy are reflected in the Territory Development Programme. For example, the following targets have been defined in the industrial Kostanay region:

1. Creating conditions for the conservation and restoration of the region's ecosystems;
2. Ensuring the management and efficient use of agricultural land (Table 8).

4169.306 million TZK has been allocated for the implementation of goal 1. The sources of funding are the republican and local budgets and own and borrowed funds. Funds from the Global Environment Fund have been raised through the Joint Project of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Republic of Kazakhstan “Updating the National Plan for the Implementation and Integration of the Management of Persistent Organic Pollutants into the National Planning and Rational Management of Medical Waste in Kazakhstan”. No funding was provided for the implementation of goal 2. As part of the Republican Programme “Akbulak”, the project “Justification of Investments for the Water Supply and Drainage System of Kostanay” is being implemented, which includes the construction of a wastewater treatment plant. The feasibility study “Justification of Investments in Modernisation Projects for the Solid Domestic Waste Management System of Kostanay” has been developed at the expense of the national budget. The state experts’ opinion on this project has been received. The estimated cost of the project is 8.5 billion TZK. Due to the lack of sources of funding in the local budget, it is not possible to implement the project. The work on the issue of attracting investment for the implementation of this project is currently in progress.

TABLE 8. PRIORITIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OF THE KOSTANAY REGION [37]

No.	Area	Goals	Ways to achieve
1.	Ecology and land resources	Creating conditions for the conservation and restoration of the region's ecosystems	<p>Setting standards for the emission of pollutants into the atmosphere.</p> <p>Setting standards for pollutant discharges.</p> <p>Organisational work aimed at providing the population of the region with waste collection and transportation services.</p> <p>Work aimed at bringing solid household waste landfills in compliance with environmental requirements.</p> <p>Monitoring for municipal waste recycling.</p> <p>Installation of medical waste processing equipment as an alternative to incineration according to the Memorandum signed under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).</p> <p>De-mercuriation of spent mercury-containing lamps from budget institutions and enterprises.</p> <p>Environmental education and propaganda.</p> <p>Monitoring the financial costs of animal reproduction activities conducted by hunters and fishermen.</p> <p>A set of activities aimed at forest reproduction and forestry.</p>
		Ensuring the rational and efficient use of agricultural land	<p>Monitoring land plots offered on tenders (competitions, auctions) in cities and districts.</p> <p>Monitoring the use of crop rotation in arable lands.</p> <p>Monitoring the use of crop rotation in grazing lands.</p> <p>Stock-taking of irrigated lands.</p>

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS

In general, the Russian Federation's approach to forming national environmental policy priorities is more in line with the language and spirit of the approach declared by the United Nations. At the same time, a number of areas stand out, for their nominations as national goals are conditioned by the prevailing political course of the country and increasing tensions in cooperation with partners from the EU and the US. According to the authors, such areas include:

- Monitoring the prevention of terrorism that poses an environmental hazard and causes eco-deterioration and degradation of the natural environment;
- Taking measures aimed to control the use and distribution of exotic species and genetically-modified organisms, including the importation, use and distribution of exotic species and genetically-modified organisms in the country.

The wording of Kazakhstan's national goals is quite general in nature. On the one hand, it allows for avoiding additional restrictions while leaving a greater degree of freedom. On the other hand, it makes it difficult to control the situation by civil society.

When implementing national environmental policy priorities, significant gaps are clearly visible between the declared priorities and the actual steps taken for their implementation. This is particularly evident in the analysis of financial resources for the implementation of national goals (Table 4).

The priority is given to the introduction of the best available technologies related to environmental improvement. Total funding is 60 %, which is 2427.3 billion roubles. Of these, 27.3 billion roubles are allocated from the federal budget, which is 1.1 % of the total share of funding for this project, and the rest is financed from extra-budgetary sources. In the second

place – the federal project “Clean Air” with total funding of 500.1 billion roubles (12.4 %). Of these, 102.2 billion roubles are allocated from the federal budget, which is 20.43 %. The third place is for the federal project “A Comprehensive System for Handling Solid Municipal Waste” with a budget of 296.2 billion roubles (7.3 %). Budget funds amounted to 107.8 billion roubles (36.4 %). In the last place, there is the project “Conservation of Biodiversity and the Development of Ecological Tourism”, which is funded entirely from the budget and amounts to 6.3 billion roubles (0.1 %). In particular, the federal project “Introduction of the best technology available”, for which the largest amount of funds is formally allocated, at the same time does not involve significant budgetary costs. Projects related to reducing atmospheric emissions and handling solid municipal waste are much more budget-intensive. Moreover, there are no guarantee, and no mechanisms for attraction extrabudgetary funding resources. In addition, the reason for choosing certain structure of state budget distribution is not justified. For instance, it is not clear why the goal “Clean country” is considered more important than the goal “preservation of unique water bodies”. There was no social discussion on national priorities in the sphere of environmental policy.

Similar problems are observed when analysing mechanisms of implementing national priorities of environmental policy in Kazakhstan. (Table 5). The largest funding from the national budget is provided for the budget programme “Effective Water Resource Management” – 72 193.741 million TZK (tenge), which is 38.7 %. The second place belongs to the budget programme “Management, Conservation and Development of Forest Resources and Wildlife”, which funding amounts to 69 190.659 million TZK (tenge) (37.1 %). It is also necessary to note the budget programme “Development of Hydrometeorological and Environmental Monitoring” providing for environmental observations and hydrometeorological monitoring (12.6 % of the allocated funds). Insignificant funding of 0.2–6.5 % is provided for the remaining 5 budget programmes. The situation in Kazakhstan differs because the state relies significantly less on attracting co-funding resources from businesses.

When implementing national priorities in the sphere of environmental policy at the regional level, Russia has a significantly higher level of centralization. Regions act primarily as performers of tasks formulated at the Federal level. The flip side of this integration is a quite active funding of the regional projects by the central government. The selected regions of the Ural Federal Okrug reviewed in this article clearly show that the choice of priorities in the implementation of environmental policy is related to the region specialisations. All four regions are engaged in forest conservation and the preservation of unique water bodies, while the rest areas are being implemented as the problems and needs of specific regions in the field of ecology arise. Thus, for KhMAO with its predominance of oil and gas production and for the Perm Krai where the share of the engineering industry is high, the Clean Air project is less relevant. On the contrary, for the Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk regions with their high share of the steel industry, the Clean Air project is very important. The Perm Krai does not commit to the Clean Country project because of the difficult economic situation. This project involves substantial co-financing of business, which is difficult to count on in the conditions of economic stagnation in the region.

On the one hand, it may seem that the regions are more independent in this case. However, this is not the case. Serious budgetary constraints at the regional level force us to rely on unstable extra-budgetary funding. On the other hand, funds from international organizations are used more actively at the regional level in Kazakhstan than in Russia.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the results of the study.

1. Environmental problems are now one of the key issues on the global political, economic and social agenda. At the global level, the United Nations determines the key substantive priorities of the environmental policy. At the same time, the UN documents emphasise the rationality of environmental issues in terms of its overall humanitarian value as an inalienable human right to a safe environment. In support of environmental policy priorities, international integration associations of post-socialist and developing countries emphasise the implementation of specific economic and social projects designed to reduce the inequality of different social groups in their access to a safe environment.
2. The environmental policy is one of the key priorities of national development both for Russia and Kazakhstan. National environmental policy goals are formulated in direct action documents, presidential decrees, and national policies and programmes. At the same time, despite the geographical proximity, historical economic ties and commonality of environmental problems experienced, Russia and Kazakhstan have not yet formed an awareness of the need for joint initiatives in the field of environmental policy.
3. On the one hand, the national priorities of environmental policy tend to follow the spirit and language of the global priorities formulated by the UN, and on the other hand, they reflect the specifics of the economic situation of a particular country, its natural conditions, the state of national ecosystems, existing ways of interactions between the state and business, and prevailing social priorities. At the same time, it is a matter of grave concern that national objectives are formulated without adequate financial resource planning. In this case, we are talking about the procedures existing in the Russian Federation when the financing of the federal project is planned to be carried out almost entirely at the expense of extra-budgetary funds without specifying as to how the attraction of such an amount of extra-budgetary funds can be carried out in reality. In Kazakhstan, the wording of national environmental policy goals is extremely amorphous and vague, which prevents civil society from exercising effective control.
4. At the regional level in Russia, it should be noted that the Russian subjects considered have not yet initiated their own independent projects in the field of environmental policy, concentrating on the implementation of federal initiatives. The economic specifics of the region are reflected in the choice of prioritised financing directions from the overall list of federal projects. In Kazakhstan, there is a significant regional shortage of funds for financing environmental policy activities. Attracting funds from international organisations cannot compensate for regional budget shortfalls and low attractiveness of the environmental investment to businesses.

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